The Effect of Cultural Values/Aspects on Intercultural Communication in Business

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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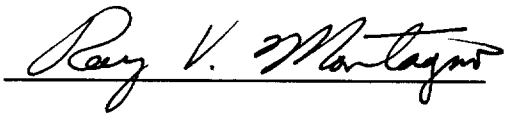

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Purpose of Thesis

The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of the many aspects of culture and values which affect intercultural communication and have the potential for causing miscommunications. This paper should serve as an introduction to the study of cultural aspects affecting international business. Further investigation into the culture of one's prospective business partner(s) will be needed.

Culture

"Culture" is one of several words in the English language which does not have a clear and definite meaning. Many people attribute different meanings to this word. Symington (1983) defines it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society." Barnouw (1963) states that culture is "a way of life of a group of people, the configuration of all the more or less stereotyped patterns of learned behavior, which are handed down from one generation through the means of language and imitation." Hodgetts and Luthans (1991) define culture yet another way: "acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and to generate social behavior."

Much of anthropology involves the study of culture. An entire branch of anthropology is devoted to this topic: cultural anthropology. According to Beals (1973), this branch "involves the systematic description and comparison of the ways of life of all the peoples of the world." Cultural anthropologists differ greatly in their views toward defining culture. Two opposing groups in the debate on culture are the cultural ideationalists and the cultural adaptationalists. The ideationalists believe that culture is ideas and that these ideas are transmitted nongenetically from generation to generation (Freilich, 1989). They believe that culture is not behavior or the result of

behavior, but that it is simply knowledge (Freilich, 1989). The adaptationalists, however, believe that "culture is an adaptive mechanism" (Freilich, 1989). They believe that "cultures are systems of socially transmitted behavior patterns that serve to relate human communities to their [environment]" (Freilich, 1989). This adaptive mechanism helps people to give meaning to their lives and their surroundings.

Despite the many definitions attributed to culture, most people would agree on two main characteristics of culture. First, culture is learned. It is "acquired by man as a member of society" (Taylor, 1969), not genetically inherited. Secondly, culture is shared. "Cultural traits are not unique to individuals" (Taylor, 1969), but are shared by a group of people.

Culture affects one's values, which help to form one's attitude, which then contributes to one's behavior (Adler, 1991). A person's behavior is defined by his or her culture (Adler, 1991). People who have different cultures may behave differently. This difference in behavior may cause conflict if these people come into contact with each other. Since people in countries outside the United States have cultures which differ from American culture, problems may arise for an American businessperson who attempts to do business with a host company in a foreign country. Serious miscommunications caused by the difference in culture (and therefore, behavior) may result, ending in failure for the companies involved to come to an agreement.

Cross-cultural Communication

Cross-cultural, or intercultural, communication is communication which "occurs when a person from one culture sends a message to a person from another culture" (Adler, 1991). Cross-cultural miscommunication occurs when the second person does not receive the sender's intended message (Adler, 1991). This miscommunication has three main causes: misperception, which involves the use of stereotypes; misinterpretation, which is caused by an inaccurate interpretation of what one sees; and misevaluation, which involves judging whether something is good or bad (Adler, 1991). One's culture affects how one perceives, interprets and evaluates a message. Therefore, because cultures differ, one person of a certain culture will perceive, interpret and evaluate a message differently than a person of a different culture. This results in cross-cultural miscommunication.

There are many aspects of one's culture which have the potential for causing a person to perceive, interpret or evaluate another's message incorrectly. However, the more one knows and understands about the culture of the sender (the person who transmitted the message), the more likely one will be able to correctly perceive, interpret and evaluate the sender's message, therefore achieving cross-cultural communication. This idea supports the argument that people should learn about the culture of the host country before attempting to do business with a company in that country. Learning about the culture before

meeting with the foreign company will eliminate many possible cultural mistakes.

In addition to learning about the culture of one's business partner(s), one should also learn about one's own culture. Many people do not understand why they act in a certain way and often do not even think about what they are doing or how someone from a different culture might perceive their actions. For example, many Americans are surprised when they discover how people from other countries perceive them. These perceptions are often very different than Americans' perceptions of themselves.

Once learning about one's own culture and the culture of one's business partner(s), one can determine which areas of the two cultures differ. By discovering these differences, one can locate areas of possible miscommunication and try to prepare for and possibly avoid them. Although one cannot possibly prepare for or avoid all possible cultural mistakes, one can prepare for or avoid many of them, making the communication with one's counterparts run much more smoothly.

The framework of this paper will center around Kluckhohn's and Strodtbeck's six values orientation dimensions. However, many of the values/aspects of culture discussed in this paper overlap one another. For example, values toward time and individualist vs. collectivist orientation both affect a third category of culture, negotiation styles. It is impossible to completely isolate cultural values/aspects into separate

categories, because in reality, these aspects are integrated as a whole into one's culture. Following is a discussion of some of the various categories of culture which affect international business.

Language

One of the most recognized aspects of culture is language. Language is a means for communicating verbally what one thinks and feels. However, because there are several languages in the world (and often several within one nation), "language is not a universal means of communication. Rather, it is a means of communication within a particular culture" (Terpstra, 1991).

The vocabulary of one's language reflects one's environment. For example, Eskimos have more than one word for snow; each word has a slightly different meaning (Terpstra, 1991). Hawaiians and Americans in the contiguous United States, however, only have one word - "snow." The many different kinds of "snow" known to Eskimos can be translated to only one word in English. Due to the environment of the United States, it is not necessary for Americans to separate snow into further categories, so only one word is sufficient, while for Eskimos, it is necessary to divide snow into further categories, and therefore, they include in their vocabulary many different concepts for snow.

One should note that a country's official language may not

be the native language of all the people in a country. Some countries even have more than one official language. For example, Switzerland and Singapore each have four official languages (Terpstra, 1991). For a country that has more than one official language or which has an official language which differs from the native language, there may be a different purpose for each language. For example, the official language in Kenya is English, and the informal, native language is Swahili. When speaking with government officials and managers, one should use English. If one instead uses the Swahili language to speak to government officials or managers, one will be showing disrespect by being so informal, and one's counterparts will feel insulted (Terpstra, 1991).

It is important to realize that although countries may have the same official language, these countries do not have the same culture (Terpstra, 1991). These differences in culture may result in entirely different meanings for certain words which otherwise appear to be identical. Canada, England, and the United States all share English as an official language. However, due to differences in the cultures of the three countries, many words and expressions in one country may have a different meaning or may not even exist in another country. For example, Canadians use the word "serviette", and Americans use the word "napkin" to describe the same object. Great differences in the meaning of some expressions among the three countries have potential for causing very harmful miscommunication. For

example, in England, the expression "knocked her up" means "knocked on her door," whereas in the United States, this expression has quite a different meaning (Terpstra, 1991).

Nonverbal Communication

The way one communicates nonverbally also reflects one's culture. Nonverbal communication is "the transfer of meaning through such means as body language and the use of physical space" (Hodgetts, 1991). Nonverbal communication includes silence, body movement, facial expression, and the use of space.

Most Americans are uncomfortable with long periods of silence. Japanese, however, are much more comfortable with long periods of silence during which they often are involved in deep thinking. During negotiations with the Japanese, many American businessmen misinterpret the silence of their Japanese counterparts as disagreement or rejection when in fact the Japanese may by seriously considering the American proposal.

Kinesics is "the study of communication through body movement and facial expression" (Hodgetts, 1991). It includes areas of communication such as eye contact, posture, and gestures (Hodgetts, 1991). An amount of eye contact beyond the norm found in one's culture can cause one to feel very uncomfortable and uneasy. Americans may feel this way when speaking with Brazilians, who use one and one-half times more eye contact than

Americans (Adler, 1991). An amount of eye contact below the norm found in one's culture can cause one to feel that the person is being dishonest or has a "shifty" personality. Since Americans use almost three times as much eye contact as the Japanese (Adler, 1991), Americans may feel that the Japanese are dishonest and not trustworthy. The Japanese, however, may feel uneasy and uncomfortable due to the amount of eye contact given by Americans and may feel that the Americans are being rude.

Posture is another aspect of kinesics which varies across different cultures. For example, Americans tend to become less formal in their posture during negotiations or meetings which last a very long time. Sometimes they relax by putting their feet up on a chair or desk. However, this behavior is very insulting to people in the Middle East, where it is considered derogatory to show the soles of one's shoes to another (Hodgetts, 350).

Gestures are an extremely important medium for nonverbal communication. They are used in order to place emphasis on certain words or in order to help get the meaning across. However, in international business, using gestures can be dangerous, because different gestures have different meanings in different cultures. By using gestures which have different meaning for one's counterparts, one can cause one's counterparts to become confused or even insulted. For example, the American gesture for "OK" does not have the same meaning in all countries. In Japan it symbolizes money; in France it describes something

that is zero or worthless (and is thus an insult in that country); and in Brazil the gesture has a very vulgar and obscene connotation (Hodgetts, 1991). Another problem caused by differences in gestures concerns how different cultures count with their fingers. For example, Americans start with the index finger, which stands for "one." Many European cultures, however, including France, start with the thumb and then proceed to the index finger. Therefore, in these cultures, the index finger means "two." Therefore, one must be careful to use the correct gesture, or one may end up buying more of something than one desires.

Another aspect of nonverbal communication is proxemics, which is the study of "how people use physical space to convey messages" (Hodgetts, 1991). People learn from a young age the correct distance at which to stand from others. One becomes accustomed to this distance and is uncomfortable if others try to increase or decrease this distance. In some cultures, such as the United States, there are different appropriate distances; the one used depends on the situation. "Intimate distance" is used when having very confidential communication; "personal distance" is used when talking to family and close friends; "social distance" is used for most business transactions; and "public distance" is used for calling across the room or giving a speech to a group of people (Hodgetts, 1991). Americans thus differentiate the appropriate distance. However, Middle Easterners and Latin Americans use much smaller distances for

business, because they do not differentiate, as do Americans, between different types of appropriate conversational distances. Therefore, when speaking with Americans, they feel uncomfortable and do not understand why Americans are so reserved, while Americans feel that Middle Easterners or Latin Americans are invading their personal space or territory (Hodgetts, 1991). This can result in serious miscommunication.

Six Basic Values Orientation Dimensions

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) suggest that there are six basic dimensions which describe the cultural orientations of societies: 1) people's qualities as individuals; 2) their relationship to nature and to the world; 3) their relationship to other people; 4) their primary activity; and their orientation in 5) space and 6) time. Adler (1991) explains each of these in great detail. Each orientation reflects a value held by the people of that culture. A value is a "basic conviction that people have regarding what is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant" (Hodgetts, 1991). One learns certain values from one's culture.

1. Perception of Individual

A person's perception of the individual "does not reflect how one thinks about individuals, but rather, one's belief about

the inherent character of the human species" (Lane, 1988). This category includes three separate dimensions: 1) people are basically good; 2) people are basically evil; and 3) people are a mixture of good and evil (Adler, 1991). Americans fall under the third dimension; they believe that people are "a mixture of good and evil, capable of choosing one over the other" (Adler, 1991). Cultures which hold that all people are basically good tend to trust people more than cultures which hold the second belief, that all people are basically evil. People belonging to cultures which hold that people are basically evil tend to mistrust and suspect others. The third level, that people are a mixture of good and evil, is held by cultures which believe that humans have the ability to be either good or evil. This implies choice. This choice in turn implies the ability to change. Therefore, cultures which hold that people are a mixture of good and evil believe that a person who exhibits evil behavior can change into a good person. This ability to change also implies that people have the ability to learn new skills. Therefore, in cultures which hold the view that humans can change, the training of current employees in new skills and techniques is common. In cultures which do not believe in human ability to change, the hiring of new employees for new skills and techniques is more common. Americans, who hold that humans are a mixture of good and evil, strongly believe in the ability to change. They believe that if one puts forth enough hard work and stamina, one can accomplish anything. The Chinese also hold the view that

humans are capable of change. This is inherent in the Chinese saying which states that the "Chinese man strives to become perfect" (Adler, 1991). Cultures which do not stress the ability to change promote the idea that one is born into a certain class of people and cannot rise to another class; regardless of what one does, one cannot become a member of a different class of people. India, through its caste system, promotes this idea of the inability of change. Differences in attitudes toward change have the potential for causing miscommunication. For example, an American manager, who believes that hard work and perseverance can help one "get ahead" in life, may have trouble understanding why his Indian subordinates are not as ambitious or willing to learn new skills. The American may attribute his subordinates' behavior to their laziness, when this is not the case. Therefore, it is important to attempt to view situations through the eyes of a different culture before coming to a conclusion about another's actions.

Much of a person's cultural beliefs about the nature of an individual stems from religious values. Christians, for example, learn about the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which teaches that people have the ability to choose between good and evil (Lane, 1988). By eating the "forbidden fruit," Adam gave in to evil. This symbolizes the fall of mankind. However, man can change and is perfectible if man follows and worships God (Lane, 1988). Since Americans are predominantly Christian, most Americans, due to their religious beliefs and upbringing, hold

the view that humans are a mixture of good and evil.

Muslim and Shinto religions differ from the Christian religion in that they teach that man is basically good (Lane, 1988). Therefore, the Arabs and the Chinese tend to trust people more than cultures whose beliefs fall under the other two dimensions. For example, an American executive in Saudi Arabia was shocked when he went to the market and discovered an unattended currency exchange booth with about $250,000 clipped to a board inside the stall (Lane, 1988). The Saudi Arabian who left the money unattended held the belief that all humans are basically good, so he felt confident that no one would take the money while he was gone. The American was shocked, because he held the belief that humans contain a mixture of both good and evil, and a temptation such as this could lead a person to commit the evil act of stealing.

A culture's perception about the nature of the individual influences the management style used by people in that culture. Cultures which believe that all humans are basically evil most likely will have an autocratic style of management (Lane, 1988). Most managers in these cultures will likely be "Theory X" managers who practice very close supervision (Lane, 1988). "Theory X" managers "believe that they must direct, control, and coerce people in order to motivate them to work" (Adler, 1991). Cultures which believe that all humans are basically good most likely will have a laissez-faire or participative style of management (Lane, 1988). Most managers in these cultures will

likely be "Theory Y" managers. "Theory Y" managers "believe that they must give employees freedom, autonomy, and responsibility in order to motivate them to work" (Adler, 1991). The assumption behind Theory Y and others similar to it (such as Likert's "System 4" management and Blake Mouton's "Managerial Grid") is that "people are basically good and trustworthy" (Adler, 1991). Cultures which believe that humans are a mixture of good and evil, such as that of the United States, most likely will have moderate supervision and consultative managers (Lane, 1988). Managers in these cultures most likely will range from "Soft Theory X" managers, those who combine a strong emphasis on strictly controlling their employees with concern for their welfare (Hodgetts, 1991), to "Theory Y" managers. The style of many managers in these cultures will fall somewhere in between the two extremes.

Perceptions about the nature of the individual also affect control systems. In a culture which holds that all humans are basically evil, most business will utilize a "tight control system based on an underlying suspicion of people" (Lane, 1988). If there are no violations, management will not modify the control system but will continue its tight control, because "they will attribute the goodness of people to the existence of the control system, not to peoples' innate goodness" (Lane, 1988). In cultures which believe that humans contain a mixture of good and evil, most business will utilize a moderately tight control system (Lane, 1988). Modifications are possible, however, and

will be made based on the manager's experience with the people involved (Lane, 1988). In cultures which hold that all humans are basically good, most businesses will utilize a very loose control system, which is "based primarily on the need for management information, rather than for surveillance, checking, and control" (Lane, 1988).

2. Perception of World

According to Adler (1991), there are three possible perceptions of the world. One view is that people are dominant over their environment. A second view is that people should act in harmony with their environment. A third view holds that people are subjugated by nature.

The first view, that of dominance over nature, holds that people have power over nature and that it is permissible to change nature, to a certain extent, to fit one's needs. North Americans, in general, hold this view. Manifestation of this view in the United States includes efforts by the United States to explore space, attempts by salespersons to influence buyers' decisions, and bioengineering and genetic programming (Adler, 1991).

The second view, that of being in harmony over nature, holds that there is "no real separation between people and their natural environment" (Adler, 1991), and that people should "live at peace with the environment" (Adler, 1991). Cultures which hold this view include the Chinese, the Navaho, and the Moslems.

The third view, that of subjugation to nature, holds that people should not interfere with nature but should instead accept its inevitable forces (Adler, 1991). These cultures do not try to change their environment. They believe that nature is the dominant force, not mankind. A few remote tribal societies hold this view (Adler, 1991).

In similar fashion to the aforementioned dimension of culture, Perception of Individual, the second dimension of culture also stems from religious beliefs. For example, the Book of Genesis, in the Bible, states, "Let them [humans] have dominion over the earth." This promotes the view of dominance over nature. Since North Americans are predominantly Christian, they believe that humans have power over nature. On the other hand, Tao Te Ching states, "Those who would take over the earth and shape it to their will, I notice, never succeed" (Adler, 1991). Therefore, due to their religious beliefs, many Chinese believe that humans should try to be in harmony with nature.

Another example which may clarify the difference between the three beliefs about one's place in nature involves the sayings of three different cultures. Americans have the saying "Can do," which means "I will do it." It portrays the American view of human dominance over nature. Moslems have the saying "En Shah Allah," which means "If God is willing." This portrays the Arab view of harmony with nature. The Inuits in Canada have the saying "Ayorama," which means "It can't be helped." This portrays the Inuit view of subjugation to nature.

Because of differing views toward nature, people of different cultures may experience conflict if they attempt to work together. For example, an American who is trying to set up a partnership with a Middle Eastern company may not understand why the deal is taking such a long time to become finalized. When his or her Arab counterpart says, "If God [Allah] is willing, it will be so," the American may think that the Arab is unhappy with the deal or is trying to stall, waiting for a better offer. The delay may frustrate the American, however it will not help him or her if he or she tries to rush things. The Arab is only trying to be in harmony with nature and will not understand why the American is trying to rush the deal. The Arab may conclude that the American is not trustworthy and may feel that the American is being very rude and impatient. This may result in failure for both parties to come to an agreement.

Uncertainty Avoidance, one of Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of culture, correlates with the Perception of World dimension. Uncertainty avoidance is "the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations, and tries to avoid these situations" (Hofstede, 1980). In cultures which have strong uncertainty avoidance, there is an "inner urge to work hard" (Hofstede, 1980). There is also a concern for security, so people in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures are less willing to take risks than those in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures. The United States has weak uncertainty avoidance; Japan has strong uncertainty avoidance.

Visible difference between these two cultures are caused by this difference in uncertainty avoidance. For example, in Japan, where there is a great concern for security, most companies offer lifetime employment, but in the United States, most people work for many different companies throughout their lives.

3. Human Relations

In order to establish a good relationship with one's counterparts, one must understand how they view human relations. Three basic perceptions of human relations exist: 1) individualism; 2) collectivism; and 3) hierarchy (Lane, 1988). Hofstede, who has done much research on culture and its affect on behavior, includes Individualism - Collectivism as one of his four dimensions of culture.

Individualism implies "a loosely-knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and of their immediate families only (Hofstede, 1980). Individualist cultures value independence (Lane, 1988). The United States exhibits the highest individualism in the world. Americans have a saying which encourages independence and individualism: "Stand on your own two feet" (Lane, 1988).

Collectivism implies "a tight social framework" (Hofstede, 1980) in which people tend to "belong to groups or collectives and to look after each other in exchange for loyalty" (Hodgetts, 1991). Many Mediterranean and Asian cultures hold this collectivist view (Lane, 1988).

The Hierarchy view, which is an extension of collectivism, holds that human relations are group-oriented but that each group is "nested in a hierarchy of other groups in society" (Lane, 1988). A person of a certain group takes care of other people in the group but also knows his or her group's place in the hierarchy of groups (Lane, 1988). India's caste system is a manifestation of this hierarchical view.

A culture's perception of human relations affects many areas of business. One is promotion. In cultures with high individualism, such as the United States, promotions are based on an individual's accomplishments, experience, and education, regardless of age. In collectivist (low individualism) cultures, such as Japan, promotions are based on seniority (Hodgetts, 1991). This difference in cultures can cause great conflict between American and Japanese business partners. For example, an American manager may wish to promote an individual of a company in Japan whom he thinks has performed well at his or her job. However, this individual is younger than many of the other Japanese employees. If the American hires the individual, the individual will be very embarrassed and unhappy about the promotion, because he or she knows that he or she does not deserve it. He or she and many of the older Japanese employees may greatly resent the American manager for not hiring according to seniority. This may result in greatly reduced production and quality of work performed by the Japanese employees.

Aside from promotions, this cultural dimension affects

career paths in another way. Individualist societies stress the importance of individual expertise and accomplishments. People in these societies tend to specialize in a certain area of job skills (Lane, 1988). Each person's job clearly calls for certain duties and responsibilities (Terpstra, 1991). Collectivist societies, however, stress the importance of group-shared responsibility, so people in these societies tend to move laterally throughout an organization, from one function to another, during their careers (Lane, 1988). Individual job descriptions in these cultures are often very general and vague.

The type of decision-making process of a company also depends on the culture's perception of human relations. In individualist societies, individuals throughout the business make decisions. Sometimes, a few individuals of an organization will meet together to discuss a certain decision, but usually the ultimate decision is left to one individual in the organization. Because it is not necessary for several individuals to agree on a decision, the decision-making process is relatively quick. Implementation of the decision is relatively slow, however, because the decision and any relative facts must be communicated to several people who were not involved in the decision-making process but will be affected by the decision or involved in the implementation process (Adler, 1991). In collectivist societies, the opposite is true for both decision-making and implementation processes. In collectivist cultures, groups make decisions rather than any one individual. This process takes longer than

individual decision-making, because several people must come to an agreement about the decision. The implementation process, however, is less time-consuming than it is for individualist cultures, because most people involved in implementation were also involved in the decision-making process and so are already familiar with the decision and the relative information once the decision is made (Adler, 1991). Americans doing business with the Japanese often spend more time in Japan than they had planned, because they had not taken into account the length of time involved in Japanese decision-making due to the collectivist culture of the Japanese.

The perception of human relations also affects control systems. Individualist cultures control their members through internal pressure, or guilt (Adler, 1991). Collectivist cultures, however, control their members through external societal pressure, or shame (Adler, 1991). People in collectivist cultures are extremely concerned with "saving face." It is devastating for a person to be singled out from the group. An example aforementioned in this paper involved an American manager who wanted to promote a young Japanese employee based on the employee's accomplishments and not on seniority. If the American were to hire the Japanese employee, the Japanese employee would have felt shame for being singled out of the group for something which is not highly valued in the Japanese culture - individual achievement.

Aside from Individualism - Collectivism, another of

Hofstede's dimensions of culture correlates with the Human Relations dimension - Power Distance. Power distance is "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1980). In high power distance cultures, people believe that inequality does and should exist, whereas people in low power distance cultures believe that inequality should be diminished (Hofstede, 1980). In high power distance cultures, superiors are inaccessible, but in low power distance cultures, they are accessible (Hofstede, 1980). The United States has low to medium power distance. Mexico has very high power distance (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, conflict may occur between an American manager in Mexico and his or her Mexican subordinates. The American may try to involve his or her subordinates in the decision-making process, however this may make his or her Mexican subordinates feel uncomfortable. They may even lose respect for the American manager, thinking that by acting on their "level," the American is proving that he or she is not a "true" manager but one of them.

Another aspect of human relations involves forms of address. Some cultures use a higher degree of formality than others. For example, in France, one must always use "Monsieur," "Madame," or "Mademoiselle" and the person's last name, and the formal "vous" form when addressing someone. Only family and close friends are on a first-name basis and use the familiar "tu" form. Americans, however, are much more informal. Often, after only a few

meetings, Americans doing business together will switch from using last names to addressing each other by their first names. If an American were to informally address his or her French business partner, the French person will feel insulted by this "rude" behavior. The American may feel that the French business person is being very cold and distant because he or she does not like the American or is unhappy with the business deal when in reality, the French business partner is behaving just as he or she would if he or she were doing business with another French person.

4. Perception of Activity

Another important aspect of culture which affects business is a culture's perception of activity. The three "activity orientations" are 1) doing; 2) being; and 3) containing/ controlling (Lane, 1988). The doing orientation stresses action, achievement, and accomplishment. "Do-ers" try to achieve the most in life (Adler, 1991). They "maximize work to achieve goals" (Adler, 1991). The United States has a doing-oriented culture.

The being orientation consists of the spontaneous flow of people, events, and ideas. This view stresses "release, indulgence of existing desires, and working for the moment" (Adler, 1991). People in being-oriented cultures ("be-ers") believe in spontaneously acting out their feelings as they experience them (Lane, 1988). Be-ers are more passive and want

to experience life (Adler, 1991). Be-ers "minimize work to live life fully" (Adler, 1991). Mexicans and Hindus are be-ers.

The containing/controlling orientation lies between the doing and being orientations. This view holds that "the senses are moderated by thought, and mind and body are balanced" (Lane, 1988). In this type of culture, "people restrain their desires by detaching themselves from objects in order to allow each person to develop as an integrated whole" (Adler, 1991).

Activity orientation affects many areas of business. One is the decision-making process. For doing-oriented cultures, decisions are based on practical criteria. For being-oriented cultures, decisions are based on emotional criteria. Lastly, for containing/controlling cultures, decisions are based on rational criteria (Lane, 1988). Due to great differences in decision criteria, people from different activity-oriented cultures may have great difficulty in coming to an agreement or making joint decisions. For example, an American, who bases decisions on practical criteria, may decide that he wants to do business with a Mexican company because the plan is feasible, and he feels that it will benefit his company. However, his Mexican counterpart, who bases decisions on practical criteria, may decide that he does not want to do business with the American, because he simply does not "feel right" about it or because he does not like the American.

The activity orientation of a culture affects how that culture views planning and change. Do-ers believe that planning

will speed up the change process (Adler, 1991). Be-ers, however, believe in allowing change to happen at its own pace. They believe that planning will only bring short-term results and never works in the long run (Adler, 1991).

Activity orientation of a culture influences what motivates the people of that culture. Do-ers are motivated by future awards such as promotions, raises, and bonuses (Adler, 1991). Be-ers, however, are not motivated by future awards but want to enjoy work now. Their rewards are based on feelings (Adler, 1991). Salary increases affect these two orientations differently. They motivate do-ers to work more in order to get money. They motivate be-ers to work less in order to spend more time enjoying life (Adler, 1991). Thus it is extremely important for American managers in foreign countries to understand how people in those countries are motivated. Otherwise, reward systems may not have the desired effect. For example, if an American (do-er) manager working in Mexico, wishes to motivate his or her employees (be-ers) to work more hours, he or she should not raise their salaries, which would cause them to work fewer hours (Adler, 1991). Instead, he or she should try to make work more enjoyable for the workers by improving the work environment or by doing something which makes work more enjoyable for the employees.

5. Perception of Time

Two aspects of a culture's perception of time affect business. One is the culture's general orientation toward time. A culture may be 1) past-oriented; 2) present-oriented; or 3) future-oriented (Lane, 1988). The second aspect of time involves standards of "temporal precision" (Adler, 1991).

Past-oriented cultures "respond to new challenges by looking at tradition" (Lane, 1988). These cultures place emphasis on customs and past experience. China and many European countries are past-oriented (Adler, 1991). Many Europeans place importance on preserving history and past traditions (Adler, 1991). Present-oriented cultures look at the immediate or short-term effects of an action (Lane, 1991). Americans are present-oriented. Americans may talk about long-term plans, but in reality they "work toward achieving this quarter's results" (Adler, 1991). Future-oriented cultures consider the possible long-term consequences (Lane, 1988) and work toward future benefits. The Japanese are very future-oriented. One example of this future orientation is shown through their views about lifetime employment. "Japanese firms invest in years of training for each employee, because they expect the employee to work for 30 to 40 years" (Lane, 1991).

Throughout the world, time is perceived differently by different cultures. For Americans, "time is money;" time is very precious. Thus people in the United States try to save time and try to work quickly in order to meet deadlines. In other

countries, such as Japan and the Latin American countries, time is viewed much differently. In these countries, tasks are performed at a much slower pace. The emphasis is on building relationships and not on trying to meet deadlines. Conflict may occur between an American and a Latin American due to differences in views about time. For example, if the American feels that he must rush to meet a deadline, he or she may want to immediately "get down to business," whereas the Latin American will want to postpone "business" until later and concentrate now on getting to know his or her business partner. The American may become frustrated at the slow pace at which the Latin American is moving and may try to speed things up by insisting that they begin to "talk business." However, the Latin American, who feels that one must like a person in order to enjoy doing business with them, will feel that the American is being very rude and impatient. He or she may also feel that the American is rushing things and so does not seem very trustworthy. Thus Americans need to remember that they view time very differently than do many other cultures.

6. Perception of Space

Kluckhohn's and Strodtbeck's (1961) sixth dimension of culture is perception of space. One aspect of space is covered in the section entitled "Nonverbal Communication." A second aspect involves a person's perception of the space surrounding him or her. There are three variations to this aspect: 1) private; 2) public; and 3) mixed (Lane, 1988).

Private-oriented cultures hold that "space is for the exclusive use of an occupant [and that it] is for an occupant's benefit" (Lane, 1988). It is part of the person's territory. If people invade one's space, one feels very uncomfortable and will often take action to remedy the situation (for example, by stepping backward, away from the person who is "invading" one's space). North Americans are very private-oriented. Public-oriented cultures view space differently. They feel that space is "available for anyone's use" (Lane, 1988). They tend to stand very close to others when speaking to them. Middle Easterners and the Japanese are public-oriented. Mixed-oriented cultures combine both views into an intermediate position (Lane, 1988).

Attitudes about space affect the physical layout of a business. Private-oriented cultures have barriers, such as private offices, closed doors, and large desks. Public-oriented cultures are often more open, with fewer barriers (Lane, 1988). A person from a private-oriented culture may feel very uncomfortable in a public-oriented office and vice versa. For example, Americans (private-oriented) may have difficulty adjusting to work in a public-oriented country such as Japan.

Hofstede (1980) suggested a fourth dimension of culture which does not correlate solely with any one of the aforementioned six dimensions of culture. His Masculinity dimension determines which values will be dominant in a society.

In masculine societies, the dominant values are "assertiveness and the acquisition of money and things" (Hofstede, 1980). In feminine societies, the dominant values are "caring for others, the quality of life, and people" (Hofstede, 1980). Masculine societies believe that men should dominate in society, but feminine societies believe that men and women should be treated equally (Hofstede, 1980). The United States has medium-high masculinity. Japan is the country with the highest masculinity. Sweden is the country with the lowest masculinity. If an American attempts to do business with a company in either of the two countries, he or she must realize that the dominant values of his or her business partner may differ greatly from his or her own.

Many other aspects of culture affect international business. Some of these include: negotiation style, the etiquette appropriate for greeting and eating, and political and religious aspects.

Negotiation style varies from culture to culture. For example, Americans prefer to quickly "close the deal." Therefore, they are often willing to compromise in order to quicken the pace of the negotiations. This relates to the American values toward time (fast-paced; present-oriented; "time is money") and the American individualist orientation (individual decision-making). Japanese, however, prefer a negotiation style which moves at a much slower pace. Therefore, they are not willing to compromise for the sake of quickly closing the deal.

This relates to the Japanese values toward time (slower-paced; future-oriented) and the Japanese collectivist orientation (group decision-making). The Japanese, in fact, use the American "weakness" toward time by allowing American negotiators to continue making concessions and often coming to an agreement when the Americans are just about to give up.

Knowing the appropriate etiquette for greeting and eating is also important; inappropriate behavior may lead to failure. For example, when one meets a Japanese business person for the first time, one should exchange business cards with him or her. Upon taking the card, one should not immediately put it away in one's briefcase or pocket but should study it carefully. If one does otherwise, one will greatly insult one's Japanese counterpart.

Political and religious views of a culture also have an impact on international business. It is important to know which topics one can or cannot (or should not) discuss. For example, Greece and Turkey have, throughout history, been at war with each other several times. The people of the two countries have a great amount of resentment and dislike for each other. One mention of Turkey to a Greek will often put the Greek in a foul mood. Therefore, one should totally avoid the subject of Turkey when talking to one's Greek counterpart(s).

As mentioned earlier, one will need to further investigate into the culture of one's business partners before attempting to do business with them. The cultural aspects listed in this paper do not include the whole spectrum of culture which can affect

international business. The more one researches and understands the culture of one's business partner(s), the more one will be able to effectively communicate with them. However, when investigating the culture, one must be very careful not to rely too heavily on stereotypes. Stereotypes may help, to a certain extent, one to understand the general view of a culture, but they do not guarantee that the specific individual(s) with whom one will be working will hold those same views or behave in exactly the same way that the stereotypes may suggest. Just as each culture is a unique blend of values, so is each person a unique blend of culture, subculture, and values.

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